

DIVERSE WORSHIP PRACTICES AND THE ROLE OF SINGING IN NIGERIAN CHURCHES

Dr. Florence Ewomazino Nweke;

Department of Creative Arts (Music Unit),

University of Lagos, Nigeria.

fnweke@unilag.edu.ng; +2348024744780;

Visiting Scholar Mountain Top University, Nigeria.

Abstract

Nigeria as a nation is characterized by multiple denominations of churches with an impact across the globe, with these myriads of churches situated around the country comes divergent modes of worship. The study has observed new unconventional' conventions among some churches in Nigeria. Whereas some churches apply the convention of beginning the service with an opening prayer, proceeding to praise, and then the homily by the officiating minister. Some churches employ a new approach to church services, as led by the Spirit. In some of these churches, before the pastor starts to preach, sessions of prayers are held accompanied by prolonged sessions of singing. It is believed that singing took place earlier during the service why then should there be more songs before the prayers leading to the message proper? This perhaps accounts for the extension of church services, but the questions are: Is this action deliberate by pastors or spontaneous based on Spirit leading? What are the beliefs of congregants and even pastors about this kind of song before prayers? Are all churches following this trend of music singing before prayers in the global south? Does this action in a way add value to congregants' spiritual lives? With a specific focus on Pentecostal churches, Catholic churches, Anglican churches, and the Aladura Churches (a.k.a. White Garment) in Lagos, Nigeria. This qualitative study adopted the in-depth interview method, responses were transcribed and analyzed. The implication of engaging in such a study is to implement religious development among churches, DE emphasizes static/procedural ways of conducting church services, which sometimes can be monotonous. This study debunks some old beliefs that church services have to follow a specific pattern when it comes to spirit-leading or leadership authority.

Keywords: Songs, worship practices, beliefs, protocol, spirit-led.

Introduction

In the heart of Lagos, Nigeria, a city bustling with life and diversity, lies a unique tapestry of religious practices. The city is home to a myriad of churches, each with its distinct mode of worship. From the solemn hymns of the Anglican churches to the vibrant choruses of the Pentecostal congregations, and the rhythmic chants of the Aladura Churches, the air is filled with a symphony of faith. "Music is vibrant

religious, artistic, and popular expressions on the continents in other spaces. Given the post-colonial and denigrating readings of Christianity in Africa, there was little academic tolerance of Christian music as bonafide African expressions, however, people have expressed themselves in singing especially in religious spaces” (Kidula, n.p). Singing tunes in the olden days is far older than 40,000 years ago, our ancestors employ this to soothe themselves as far as they can speak. Then, in the 7th century, singing started in the church. Kleinheksel (1964) affirms that believers engage in the art of worshipping God through singing and the spoken words of God. Christians have always praised God through songs anyway. The book of Acts accounts for a church gathering in homes, there was no particular order for conducting the services there were manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. A songwriter once wrote

“When the power of God descended, on the day of Pentecost All the days of waiting ended They received the Holy Ghost” Mufford (1876).

There was no particular order of worship, they had unity of purpose, and they received the Holy Ghost during their gathering. As far back as the 2nd-century choral repertory survives, in the 7th century, music began in churches, after a few years, the singing of hymns started, at this time, the hymns helped people to reflect on the songs and have their lives examined. Somehow people began to practice singing in church. Ephesians 5:19, tells believers to “sing to the Lord, bless His name; tell of His Salvation” in that order. The early church era began singing and this is recognized as an integral part of worship, often preceding the sermon (Leeman, 2014).

Aim: This study examines the diverse worship practices, focusing on the role of singing in Nigerian churches.

Over time, this practice has evolved, leading to the development of unique worship practices in churches in the global south. In some churches, pastors have initiated additional singing sessions before their sermons, a practice referred to as 'double singing'. This study explores whether these practices are deliberate or spontaneous, and their impact on congregants' spiritual lives. It also examines the beliefs of congregants and pastors about this practice, probing whether all churches in the global south, particularly Nigeria, follow the strict order of music singing before prayers. This study delves deeper into the diverse worship practices in Nigerian churches, with a particular focus on the role of singing. The research is grounded in the context of Nigeria's rich religious landscape, characterized by a myriad of churches each with its distinct mode of worship⁴

The Pentecostal cosmology is a lens through which diverse worship practices in Nigeria can be understood. The Pentecostal cosmology places its emphasis on the active work of the Holy Spirit and provides a unique lens through which to understand the diverse worship practices observed in Nigerian churches. This cosmology is characterized by a dynamic interaction between the spiritual and the physical realms, where the Holy Spirit is believed to guide and influence worship practices¹.

In the context of this study, Pentecostal cosmology helps explain the observed unconventional conventions in some churches, such as extended singing sessions before prayers. These practices can be seen as manifestations of the Holy Spirit's guidance, reflecting the Pentecostal belief in the spontaneity and unpredictability of the Spirit's work².

Moreover, Pentecostal cosmology aligns with the Chaos Theory, which posits that minor changes in the starting point can lead to significant outcomes. This resonates with the Pentecostal understanding of the Holy Spirit's work, where seemingly minor changes in worship practices, guided by the Spirit, can have profound impacts on congregants' spiritual lives. Furthermore, Pentecostal cosmology underscores the importance of experiential faith, often expressed through singing and other forms of worship¹. This emphasis on experiential faith can help us understand why singing, as a form of experiential worship, plays such a significant role in Nigerian churches. Pentecostal cosmology provides a valuable framework for understanding the diverse worship practices in Nigerian churches. Nigeria, with its rich religious landscape, is home to a variety of worship styles that reflect the country's diverse cultural and religious heritage. Here are some of the divergent worship styles observed in Nigeria:

1. **Pentecostal Worship:** Pentecostal churches in Nigeria are known for their vibrant and expressive worship styles. These churches often incorporate indigenous languages in their liturgy and music and use musical instruments as a vehicle for spiritual expression⁴.
2. **Catholic and Anglican Worship:** Catholic and Anglican churches in Nigeria typically follow a more structured and liturgical form of worship. The services often include hymns, prayers, readings from the Bible, and a sermon.
3. **Aladura Churches Worship:** The Aladura Churches, also known as white garment churches, emphasize prayer and healing. They reflect the indigenization of Christianity through their use of African symbols, traditional healing modalities, and worship styles, including singing³.
4. **Traditional Worship:** In addition to Christianity and Islam, traditional African religions also have a significant presence in Nigeria. These traditions often involve elements of both monotheism and polytheism, with a supreme deity or creator God, and also a multitude of other deities³.
5. **Gospel Music Styles:** Nigerian gospel music styles are diverse and often reflect the country's rich cultural heritage. These styles range from hymns and spiritual songs to more contemporary forms of gospel music.

Each of these worship styles contributes to the rich tapestry of religious expression in Nigeria. They reflect not only the country's religious diversity but also its cultural, historical, and social complexities (McKinnon, 2021).

Pentecostal Cosmology offers insights into the role of the Holy Spirit in shaping these practices and their impact on congregants' spiritual lives.

The study acknowledges the influence of socio-cultural practices on worship, noting that African Christian churches often incorporate culture, traditional beliefs, and practices in worship². This integration results in unique worship practices, such as the extended singing sessions observed in some churches. The Aladura Churches, for instance, are independent African churches that emphasize prayer and healing. They reflect the indigenization of Christianity through their use of African symbols, traditional healing modalities, and worship styles, including singing³. The study also recognizes the influence of historical epochs on the proliferation of churches and ministries in Nigeria⁴. These historical influences have shaped the diverse denominational practices observed in the country today.

The study aligns with the **Chaos Theory**, propounded by mathematician James A. Yorke in 1975 and later rediscovered by Edward Lorenz. The Chaos Theory, which is not about disorder but rather about very complicated systems of order, is used to make sense of the unpredictability observed in congregants' engagement in singing during services. The Chaos Theory, which forms the theoretical framework of this study, provides a lens through which to understand these diverse practices. The theory, sensitive to initial conditions, posits that minor changes in the starting point can lead to significant outcomes⁵. The study found divergent opinions among respondents about singing or not singing before a sermon, with some viewing it as time-consuming and others as a source of double blessings. The Chaos Theory examines this unpredictability and the complex cycles that these systems go through, even though specific situations are rarely duplicated or repeated. The theory studies equilibrium, suggesting that the more one sings in church services without boundaries and restrictions, the more blessings one is predicted to receive. This raises the question of what happens when one praises just once in the service, following orders of service conscientiously. The Chaos theory is sensitive to initial conditions and assumes that a slight change in the starting point can lead to significant outcomes, developing into a concept named: 1. the Butterfly effect- likened to singing that moves mountains and solves human problems, wrought miracles and ushers one into God's presence. 2. Attractor: a concept that decides if the church eventually settles for multiple singing before church service or not (based on responses from this study, over 75% revealed singing before the sermon is not a new trend in their churches. Hence, the pastor settles for this act based on the outcome received). 3. Strange Attractor- a dynamic kind of equilibrium that represents some trajectory upon which a system runs from situation to situation without ever settling down.

1. The Impacts of Pentecostal Churches on the Growth of Christianity in ...
2. Indigenous Traditions in Nigeria | Religion and Public Life at Harvard ...
3. Classification of Nigerian Gospel Music Styles - Academia.edu

4. Christians, Muslims and Traditional Worshippers in Nigeria ... - Springer

This study realized that some Orthodox churches do not consciously sing before sermons, the Pentecostal churches do sing consciously before sermons, these are two different dynamics, yet none of these two ever want to settle on what the other holds dear both are serving God, thus, believe they are both doing the right thing. At the end of singing or not singing before the sermon, the congregants decide the portion of blessing they wish to receive from God. They have a choice of settling or not settling for a double portion of God's blessings. Therefore churches are admonished to stay in tune with the Holy Spirit and be subject to continuous leading by the Holy Spirit. This makes the church service rewarding for all the congregants and the pastors themselves and this aligns with Pentecostal Cosmology as discussed above.

The significance of this study is multifold. Firstly, it provides an in-depth understanding of whether these practices are deliberate or spontaneous. Secondly, it explores their impact on congregants' spiritual lives, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of faith and worship. Lastly, the study aims to encourage religious development by challenging the monotonous, procedural conduct of church services, thereby fostering a more dynamic and engaging worship experience.

The study on diverse worship practices and the role of singing in Nigerian churches aligns with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SDG 4 - Quality Education: The study contributes to a better understanding of religious practices, promoting education and awareness about diverse worship practices¹.

SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities: By studying diverse religious practices, the research promotes the understanding and acceptance of religious diversity, thereby reducing inequalities¹.

SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: The study can foster peaceful coexistence by enhancing understanding and respect for diverse religious practices⁵. The importance of these SDGs to the study lies in their emphasis on education, equality, and peace, which are crucial for understanding and appreciating religious diversity.

The implications of undergoing this study in Nigeria today are significant. Nigeria is a country with a rich religious landscape, and understanding the diverse worship practices can promote religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence⁹. Moreover, the insights from the study can inform religious leaders and policymakers, leading to more inclusive and engaging worship practices.

Methodology

The research employs both primary and secondary methods of data collection, including a critical evaluation of literature, databases, and online resources, as well as primary data sourced from Christians from diverse denominations using a semi-structured questionnaire in the form of an interview approach, the questions asked were structured giving room for an open-ended response to allow respondents to express themselves on the subject matter after the order of the research objectives.

Data were analyzed content by content using themes and Atlas-ti software was used on some responses to draw unique insights to the research questions.

The questions upon which responses were expected from the respondents were firstly classified under each of the research questions as a way to align with the objective of this study. The first research question has questions 1 and 2 aligning to answer; the second research question focuses on questions 7 and 8; the third research question has questions 4, 5, 6, and 10 while the fourth research questions have question 3.

The responses were coded to enable drawing insight for the study. The first section of the study presents the descriptive analysis of the preambles and Excel was used in generating the outcome. The second part of the investigation focused on the crux of the study, both manual and Atlas. ti software was used for the coding. Based on the response, more of the manual was used and the discussion followed.

Data presentation and discussion

The age distribution of respondents showed that the majority of the respondents 51% falls within the age range of 40 and 60 years old, next are those whose age bracket is between 26 and 39 years which is 44%. Not more than 4% are 61 years and above while not more than 2% are below 25 years (see Table 1.1). Seeing the number of the respondents between 26 and 60 years is an indication of a better experience in analyzing the impact of songs as praise and worship before a sermon.

Table 1.1: Respondents' Age

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
18 - 25	1	1.8
26 -39	24	43.6
40 - 60	28	50.9
61 and above	2	3.6
Total	55	100.0

Source: Author, 2023

This research established the distribution of respondents across places of worship across different denominations including the white garment church popularly known as the '*Aladura*' (see Table 1.2). Describing their churches, it is found that, 51% of respondents in this study attend Pentecostal churches, respondents who worship in the Orthodox churches are 36% while those that belongs to the interdenominational ministry account for not more than 13% (see Table 1.3)

Table 1.2: Respondents' Place of Worship

Items	Frequency	Percent(%)
An online church	1	1.8
Anglican Church	6	10.9
C.A.C	1	1.8
Catholic Church	1	1.8
Chapel of Annunciation	1	1.8
Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church	2	3.6
Christ Church Mapo Ibadan	1	1.8
Christ People's Church	1	1.8
Deeper Life Bible Church	6	10.9
First Baptist Church	4	7.3
Foursquare Gospel Church	2	3.6
Grace and Truth Embassy	1	1.8
Great Impact Baptist Church	1	1.8
Harvesters International	1	1.8
Holy Trinity Anglican church Ikate	1	1.8
Living Faith Church	2	3.6
Love of Christ Church	1	1.8
Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries	4	7.3
Northridge Church	1	1.8
Providence Baptist Church	1	1.8
Scripture Pasture Christian Center	1	1.8
St Raphael Catholic Church, Lagos	1	1.8
St. Ignatius Catholic Church	1	1.8
Steele Height Baptist Church	1	1.8
The Agape Community Baptist Church	1	1.8
The Apostolic Church	1	1.8
The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)	7	12.7
Victoria Fellowship Church	3	5.5
Total	55	100.0

Source: Author, 2023

Table 1.3. Choose the one that describes your church

Items	Frequency	Percent (%)
Interdenominational	7	12.7
Orthodox	20	36.4
Pentecostal	28	50.9
Total	55	100.0

Source: Author, 2023

The role of respondents in their different places of worship revealed that nearly 33% are Choristers which account for the largest role, nearly 22% are pastors/assistant pastors, and 1 in 5 (20%) are musicians (see Table 1.4). In addition, those who classified themselves as members account for about 16%, respondents who are church workers account for about 4% and nearly 2% each is media support, non-conventional, and Sunday school teachers respectively.

Thus, this demographic information of respondents becomes necessary to explain the role they play in asserting if singing should be done anytime during church service or should be done specifically at a time before the sermon. It is evident in this study that, respondents neither wished nor asked for songs to be sung during, at the middle, or the end of the service, all these respondents wished for was for the Holy Spirit to lead who is in charge of the church service for that day to do the Spirit bidding. This attribution comes from the majority of the respondents who belong to the Pentecostal movement.

Table 1.4. Which one describes your role?

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Chorister	18	32.7
Media Support	1	1.8
Member	9	16.4
Musician	11	20.0
Non-conventional	1	1.8
Pastor/Assistant Pastor	12	21.8
Sunday School Teacher	1	1.8
Worker	2	3.6
Total	55	100.0

Source: Author, 2023

Discussion

Research question 1: Is this action deliberate by pastors or spontaneous based on Spirit leading?

It is believed to be appropriate and good to hold extended sessions of singing before prayers and sermons or preaching as this “prepares peoples’ spirit and souls” as well as “evokes the presence of God”. In many Christian denominations, singing is a deliberate and structured part of the worship service. The songs that are sung may be carefully selected to reflect the theme of the service or the liturgical calendar, and the congregation may be instructed to stand, sit, or kneel during certain parts of the music. True praise delights the Lord as it “prepares the atmosphere”, and “congregants’ consciousness” as this helps to “connect with God” easily. This shows that

singing before the prayers/sermon is deliberate to stir and as an act to water the plant for better fruits. Singing calls the attention of God and opens the gate to heavenly inspiration. However, the respondents claimed that:

“Singing is an important aspect of worship experience and it should be prioritized and given credence. God speaks to individuals differently and some can receive their personal message for the day, week, month and beyond in the moment of worship through singing of songs”

and in the Old Testament songs were used by the tribe of Judah in times of warfare as

“God dwells in the praises”

There are several benefits of singing before the prayers/sermon as

“...it is believed that music has the power to unite the mortal and the divine in worship.”

Although, a fewer number claimed that singing before the prayer/sermon is done differently in some churches, thus, *“Not necessary”* as it prolongs the worship time.

As a result of the above, these actions by the pastors are mostly “spontaneous and deliberate” as it depends on how the spirit leads. It is deliberate because it is seen to

“... minister life to the congregation and help prepare their heart for the sermon”

and

“... many churches that have experienced and have felt the power of singing before sermon and prayers, respondents exclaimed, have deliberately turned the practice into a liturgical pattern of worship.”

However, it is claimed to be spontaneous in some quarters as they are not planned. In some Pentecostal or Charismatic churches, singing and worship may be highly improvisational, with the congregation singing or speaking in tongues as they feel led by the Holy Spirit. In these settings, the worship leader may select songs on the spot or follow the lead of the congregation, rather than relying on a planned order of service. This proves that it goes by the spirit then. The respondents affirmed the spontaneity that:

“It should not always be structured as we do in most of our churches” as “I feel it's as the Spirit leads, for me, it launches me into the realm of the spirit...” (respondent).

Research question 2: What are the beliefs of congregants and even pastors about this kind of song before prayers?

The beliefs of congregants and even pastors about songs before prayers can vary widely depending on the specific religious tradition and the cultural context in which the services are held. In some traditions, music is seen as an important part of worship, and congregants believe that singing before prayers can help set the tone for the service and prepare them for a deeper spiritual experience. In other traditions, music may be viewed as less central to worship, and the songs sung before prayers may be seen as simply a way to pass the time or to create a sense of community among those in attendance. They may also believe that certain types of music are more appropriate for religious services than others. In some cases, the choice of music may be influenced by theological beliefs, with certain songs chosen to reflect the particular beliefs and values of the congregation.

The congregants and pastors claimed they feel the impact and it improves the worship experience. It is affirmed that music used during the extended sessions of singing impacts the worship experience as it:

“May enhance prayers and overall church atmosphere”, “brings connection and comfort” as it boosts the energy of the congregation and in turn “... creates room for open heaven.”

Overall, the beliefs of both pastors and congregants play a significant role in shaping the way church services are conducted, and these beliefs can vary widely depending on the specific religious tradition and cultural context. The choice of music, order of service, emphasis on certain themes, level of formality and participation of the congregants can significantly influence how services are conducted. This study revealed that the influence might be “transient”; although, the “leaders’ personality and ideology” often influence how services are conducted. The respondents affirmed that:

“People conduct services based on their beliefs and how it makes them feel and that is reflected on how their message is presented during the service.” And *“Every Pastor designs the way the service should go in Pentecostal settings but the orthodox has fixed service...”*

“If the Pastor or member is dogmatic in believe and lifestyle, definitely they will embrace the procedural or stereotype nature of service and if otherwise there will be a level of flexibility and life being added to the worship experience.”

Ultimately, the beliefs of congregants and pastors about songs before prayers are shaped by a complex mix of cultural, social, and religious factors, and can vary widely from one community to the next.

Research question 3: Are all churches following this trend of music singing before prayers in the global south?

All the respondents affirmed that they observed trends of the singing before prayers/sermon in other churches they have visited which partly validate the deliberate actions of the pastors and congregants' beliefs on singing before the service. It is affirmed in this study that:

“Service should be diversified as spirit leads. For instance, if the spirit leads to just worship within a service, I believe that would suffice as far as God's name is praised. The same for prayers and sermons or other aspects of worship”

while

“Services in the Anglican church have always been dynamic and culture-specific”

Although, in some old beliefs about the protocols of church services, “praises are not important” as well as “inflexible mode of worship”.

Thus, not all churches in the Global South follow the trend of music singing before prayers. The use of music and singing in worship can vary widely across different countries and cultures in the Global South, depending on factors such as the specific religious tradition, the local customs and practices, and the preferences of individual congregations. Although, many churches in the Global South do incorporate music and singing into their worship services, the style and format of the music can vary widely. In some African churches, music and singing may be highly improvisational and may involve the use of drums, percussion instruments, and call-and-response patterns. However, some churches in the Global South do not use music or singing as a regular part of their worship services at all, but may instead focus on prayer, preaching, or other forms of worship.

The majority of the respondents believed that singing before prayers/sermon is prevalent which

“...should not be peculiar to Nigeria churches, it should be approached as a gate-pass for entering into God's presence” anywhere in the world.

Thus, this makes it

“...unique to most churches but not all though.”

However, it is claimed to be

“...a biblical pattern and would be found wherever Bible is believed and obeyed.”

Research question 4: Does this action in a way add values to congregants' spiritual lives?

For many people, singing is a powerful tool of worship and spiritual growth, providing a way to express emotions, connect with others, and deepen their relationship with God. Based on the respondents, yes, singing adds value to the spiritual lives of congregants in Christendom. Singing has been a core component of Christian worship for centuries, and many Christians believe that singing is an essential part of their faith. Singing adds value as it connects individuals to God, creates a sense of community, encourages reflection and contemplation, and reinforces theological concepts. This is affirmed that:

“I believe it would add to the spiritual lives of the worshipers because, if the church musicians are able to connect the people with the Divine with their music, the word of God would sink, the people would pray to God from the bottom of their hearts, the God who sees in the secret perhaps would show his people mercy. It also has a way it rubs of on the people's faith and makes them trust in God.”

And, it does add value;

“... because of the way the content of the songs prepares our heart towards the message” while “Some simple lyrics of songs sink better and keep ringing in the heart of hearers to help the spiritual life”

Discussion of Findings:

Some respondents in the study assumed that the act of singing before a sermon delights the Lord and invokes His presence prepares one's heart for God's word. Adding that, he who sings prays twice, hence he receives a double portion of God's blessings. The congregants in the Pentecostal churches believe singing is a normal trend that launches people into God's presence and brings down His Spirit.

Meanwhile, about 30% of respondents within the Anglican community, gave an insight into the service procedures and asserted that it often does not follow this order of singing before the prayer that leads to the sermon, as some of them believe this order of singing before sermon after the normal choir singing is a deliberate attempt by the pastors who often do not adopt a rigid order of service. This group of respondents asserts that these conventions of the pastor's singing before the sermon after the choir sang for the day add no spiritual value to the congregants, rather, it is time-consuming and therefore, unnecessary.

This study had some respondents say that singing is not important during church service, that there should be a non-flexible mode of worship, that singing before prayers preceding the sermon is superfluous and distracting, that prayers be prayers and song sessions be song sessions, rather than singing spontaneously during

church services. Some respondents believe it is worldly to follow this trend of singing vigorously before a sermon, the study adds that church service should be strictly ordered, that music is entertainment, that spontaneous singing is not liturgical, and that services should be dynamic and culture-specific.

However, about 5% of respondents added that church services should be less procedural to allow the flow of God's move. Adding meaning to the above, Brandon (2015) quoting from Warren added that, a great church does three things, Sing, preach, and then give thanks and offerings. If this is the case, then the global South churches that follow these trends of singing, listening to sermons, and giving thanks are not far from the global North conventions. In the Global North, RocketAdmin (n.d) says this about their church procedures, which is no different from the way music is used in the Global South from a personal point of view "Have music playing before the first person shows up, and after the last person leaves. Whether it's worship music, contemporary Christian music, instrumental music, or theme-based music, just have something to fill the silence."

There is no singular way of conducting church services as deduced from our findings, the convention of spontaneous singing before the sermon is seen in almost all the Pentecostal churches examined in this study. This study finds that the Orthodox churches do not do spontaneous singing, there is singing during church service but this is done only at the allotted time meant for singing.

This study found a rather interesting theme: He who Sings well, prays Twice (St. Augustine) and Receives Double Portion" Juxtaposing this with Isaiah 61:7 "For your shame YOU SHALL HAVE DOUBLE; and for confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall POSSESS THE DOUBLE: everlasting joy shall be unto them." Those who received double shall have joy, you often sing when you are merry, more often, singing brings joy to people's hearts. The action of singing before prayer/sermon takes two waves as it could be deliberately engaged by the pastors and in some congregations, it is done as the spirit leads. Ultimately, the beliefs of congregants and pastors about songs before prayers are shaped by a complex mix of cultural, social, and religious factors, and can vary widely from one community to the next. It has been established that not all the churches in the global South follow the trend as some do not use music or sing before prayers/sermons. For those that practice this affirmed it adds value most especially raising the spirit of the congregants by opening the gate of heaven to connect with God.

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2. Faith, Fame, and Fortune Varieties of Nigerian Worship in Global ...

3. Aladura Churches in Nigeria | Religion and Public Life at Harvard ...

4. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-021-00450-5>

Recommendation:

Undoubtedly, singing before a sermon is not so new a convention in the global south church services in Pentecostal gatherings. Although not a style adopted by the orthodox in the global south, it is rather dynamic and comes intermittently based on God's Spirit's leading. Some members of the adoration groups within the Catholic church settings are adopting this style of rigorous singing before their interdenominational prayer meetings as against what the orthodox church stands to believe. This choice of singing before a sermon is a matter of choice by the church leadership irrespective of the denominational background. The following stating the danger of not conducting this study now and then state the significance of engaging in this study, what are the ways of ensuring churches engaged in singing before service observed the embodiment theory: This qualitative study explores the diverse worship practices in Nigerian churches, focusing on Pentecostal, Catholic, Anglican, and Aladura Churches in Lagos. The research observes unconventional conventions in some churches, such as extended singing sessions before prayers, and questions whether these practices are deliberate or spontaneous, and their impact on congregants' spiritual lives. The study aims to encourage religious development and challenge the monotonous, procedural conduct of church services.

The urgency of conducting this qualitative study lies in the rapidly evolving landscape of worship practices in Nigerian churches, particularly those in Lagos. The study focuses on Pentecostal, Catholic, Anglican, and Aladura Churches, each characterized by unique worship conventions. A significant observation is the unconventional practice of extended singing sessions before prayers in some churches. The danger of not conducting this study now is the potential loss of understanding of these evolving practices and their impact on congregants' spiritual lives. As these practices continue to evolve, there is a risk that the nuances of these changes and their implications may be overlooked or misunderstood.

To ensure that churches engaged in singing before service observe the embodiment theory, it is crucial to promote awareness and understanding of this theory among church leaders. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and training sessions. Furthermore, church leaders should be encouraged to consciously incorporate the principles of the embodiment theory in designing their worship services, thereby creating a more immersive and spiritually enriching experience for congregants. The following recommendations are proposed:

Promote Awareness: Churches should be encouraged to promote awareness and understanding of the embodiment theory among their leaders and congregants. This can be achieved through workshops, seminars, and training sessions.

Incorporate Flexibility: Churches should be encouraged to incorporate flexibility in their worship services, allowing for the spontaneity and unpredictability of the Spirit's work. This could include extended singing sessions before prayers or other unconventional conventions.

Foster Dialogue: Encourage inter-denominational dialogue to foster understanding and respect for diverse worship practices. This could help promote religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Further Research: Further research should be conducted to explore the impact of these diverse worship practices on congregants' spiritual lives in more depth. This could include longitudinal studies or comparative studies with churches in other regions.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study provides advanced insights into the diverse worship practices in Nigerian churches. It highlights the importance of understanding these practices in their socio-cultural and historical contexts and underscores the role of singing in shaping the spiritual lives of congregants. This study has provided valuable insights into the diverse worship practices in Nigerian churches and the significant role of singing. It has highlighted the importance of understanding these practices in their socio-cultural and historical contexts and underscored the potential impact on congregants' spiritual lives. The study has also emphasized the need for flexibility in worship services and the importance of being led by the Spirit. It is hoped that these findings will contribute to a richer understanding of worship practices in Nigerian churches and inform future practices.

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